

December 10, 2009 - House Passes Omnibus Appropriation Bills

WASHINGTON,

D.C. -- Congressman

John P. Murtha, Chairman of the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Defense, announced today that the U.S. House of Representatives has passed a \$446.8 billion Omnibus Appropriations Bill that includes funding for projects and programs throughout western Pennsylvania. This legislation wraps up work on the remaining non-defense fiscal year 2010 appropriations bills (excluded from this bill are the FY10 Defense Appropriations bill, which will be considered next week, and those appropriation bills already signed into law) and must still pass the Senate before it heads to the President for his signature. The House passed the Omnibus Appropriations bill 221-202.

"This appropriations bill provides funding for worthy projects that will bring jobs, economic development, new infrastructure, and vital services to western Pennsylvania," commented Murtha. "I'm proud to secure this funding, which will improve the quality-of-life throughout our region."

For a summary of the individual bills, please visit <http://appropriations.house.gov/>.

Murtha was successful in securing funding in the FY10 Omnibus Appropriations Bill for the following programs:

Commerce, Justice, Science

Included within the FY10 Commerce, Justice, Science Appropriations bill is \$1,000,000 for Fayette County to replace its outdated emergency responder communications equipment with a state-of-the-art mobile data infrastructure system.

System enhancements include allowing a call to be routed to a first responder via direct data transfer from the dispatcher's computer aided dispatch (CAD) software. This provides greater accuracy of emergency response information between the more than 90 police, fire, and ambulance companies throughout the County and also improves response time. In conjunction with this upgrade, the County plans to improve its Emergency Operations Center (EOC).

The appropriations bill also includes \$650,000 to upgrade the public safety radio communications network in Indiana County. The current network is insufficient to meet the County's fire, police, EMS, dispatch and paging needs. This upgrade to a digital public safety radio network will significantly improve communications between emergency services personnel during routine calls and emergency disasters/events.

"In the past few years, we have invested millions of dollars of federal money into buying equipment for individual police departments," said Murtha. "But having a modern county-wide emergency communications system to coordinate services and response is absolutely essential for public safety."

Also included in the appropriations bill is \$350,000 for the Center for Global Competitiveness at Saint Francis University and Saint Vincent College. Since 1993, the Center has assisted small businesses throughout the region in exploring new and expanded international and domestic marketing opportunities. Services made available through the Center include individualized marketing consulting, international trade assistance, international trade event promotion, videoconferencing facilities, global assistance grants, training seminars and newsletters.

The appropriations bill also includes \$44,023,000 for the National Drug Intelligence Center (NDIC) in Johnstown, as requested by President Obama. The NDIC is the nation's principal center for strategic domestic counterdrug intelligence, providing analytical products to the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP), Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), DOD, Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), U.S. Department of Treasury, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, Food and Drug Administration, and state and local entities. The NDIC also provides real-time support to law enforcement and intelligence communities by conducting document and computer exploitation for materials associated with counterdrug and/or counterterrorism investigations.

The appropriations bill provides \$125,000 for the Economic Growth Connection of Westmoreland County to assist businesses in the region with identifying government bids, contract awards, and foreign business opportunities. The EGC will also use this funding to support business and workforce seminars and to maintain a database of regional manufacturing capabilities to match business needs with local services.

Also included in the appropriations bill is \$125,000 for the Progress Fund, a community development financial institution that creates jobs and improves communities by providing entrepreneurial support and capital. The Fund serves a 39-county region of southwestern and northern Pennsylvania, the entire State of West Virginia, and Appalachian Ohio. Since 1997, the Progress Fund has made 268 loans totaling more than \$24.4 million, and has created or retained nearly 2,000 jobs. This funding will enable the Progress Fund to provide technical support and additional capital to a greater number of businesses throughout the region.

The Appropriations bill also includes \$100,000 for the Pittsburgh Life Sciences Greenhouse Tech Belt Biosciences Initiative. This initiative supports bioscience companies in western Pennsylvania through business assistance and investment programs to increase the linkage between research, technology and commercialization; develop entrepreneurial enterprises; grow western Pennsylvania's talent; and help firms locate, expand or start up in our region.

"In these tough economic times, it's essential that we provide a broad range of support and resources to assist our local small businesses," said Murtha. "By leveraging the expertise of the Economic Growth Connection, the Progress Fund, and the Pittsburgh Life Sciences Greenhouse we can continue to attract good paying jobs to western Pennsylvania."

Labor, Health and Education

The appropriations bill includes \$550,000 for the United Mine Workers of America's Enhanced Mining Skill and Safety Training program. This program provides miners with basic and advanced technical training needed to enhance job skills and

safety knowledge. The UMWA also operates Career Centers in southwestern Pennsylvania and West Virginia to offer training and retraining programs to miners who have lost their jobs.

Also included in the appropriations bill is \$200,000 for the Johnstown Area Regional Industries (JARI) Workforce Development program. This funding will be used to expand the current workforce development program to offer increased training opportunities and work experiences for entrepreneurs, new hires, incumbent, and displaced workers.

"It's essential in today's tough economy to have workforce development programs that enhance job skills and training," said Murtha. "Both the UMWA and JARI do an outstanding job with programs that help both individuals and employers navigate today's demanding job market."

The appropriations bill also includes \$400,000 to replace key pieces of diagnostic radiologic equipment to the Mon Valley Hospital. This equipment, which is essential to the hospital's continued ability to serve the Mon Valley, includes mammography units, a fluoroscopy unit, and cystoscopy equipment.

Also included in the appropriations bill is \$350,000 for Indiana Regional Medical Center's Electronic Medical Record Initiative. Implementing an electronic medical record system will improve the hospital's ability to serve patients by reducing errors, wait times, and costs.

The appropriations bill also includes \$300,000 to assist Highlands Hospital with a much needed expansion of the hospital's emergency department.

Also included in the appropriations bill is \$150,000 for Excelsa Health, Frick Hospital to develop a breast care center that includes digital mammography and ultrasound imaging.

“With health care costs continuing to rise, many of our smaller regional hospitals do not have the financial resources to make capital improvements,” added Murtha. “These hospital improvements are absolutely essential to the health and well-being of our communities, and I’m proud to be able to secure funding for them.”

Military Construction and Veterans Affairs

The appropriations bill includes \$11,800,000 for construction of a new training and maintenance facility for the Army Reserve in Uniontown, as requested by President Obama. The project consists of a 30,912 SF training building, 4,841 SF maintenance building, and a 913 SF unheated storage building.

“A new Army Reserve Center will provide our local soldiers with the facilities and resources they need to maintain essential equipment and to train for future missions,” said Murtha. “This new facility is good news for our soldiers and for our community.”

Transportation, Housing, and Urban Development

The appropriations bill includes \$625,000 for the City of Washington’s East Chestnut Street Garage and Intermodal Transit Center. This funding will help revitalize the Central Business District by making significant enhancements to the existing City-owned parking garage. These enhancements include refurbishment of the existing garage, addition of safety and security enhancements, and the development of a new 100-space park & ride/bus transfer area.

“This project will provide much needed parking space in the downtown area and will help the City’s efforts to redevelop the land surrounding the existing structure,” said Murtha.

